



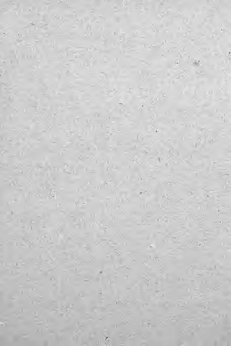
# REGIMENTAL HISTORY

LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE  
(ROYAL CANADIANS)

2nd CANADIAN ARMoured REGIMENT

ITALY

AUGUST 1944



# REGIMENTAL HISTORY

## LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE

(Royal Canadians)

### 2nd Canadian Armoured Regiment

Until the second Riel Rebellion there had been no regular troops in the West, but in 1885 it was decided to form the « Royal School of Mounted Infantry » to be stationed at Fort Garry and to serve as a school of instruction for the Militia for Western Canada. In 1888 its name was changed to the « Canadian Mounted Rifle Corps », and in 1896 these troops formed the basis of the « First Mounted Rifles, Special Service Force » which was sent to the South African War. This unit had a distinguished record and two of its members were awarded the V.C. Upon its return to Canada it was stationed in Winnipeg, as a unit of the Permanent Active Militia, and as such provided instructors for the non-Permanent Active Militia of Western Canada.

In January 1900, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, one of the builders of the C.P.R., offered to raise and equip a regiment of cavalry, to be known as « Strathcona's Horse », for service in South Africa. The Regiment was recruited from more than 1,000,000 square miles of Western Canada, mostly from serving and former members of the R.N.W.M.P. It was a picked Regiment in every respect. Superintendent Sam Steele of the R.N.W.M.P. was appointed as its com-

manding officer. This unit had a most distinguished record in South Africa as part of the 3rd Mounted Infantry Brigade, one of its personnel being awarded a V.C. In 1900, at the end of its service in South Africa, the Regiment was personally presented with its medals and a guidon by King Edward VII, and early in 1901 returned to Canada where it was disbanded. Strathcona's Horse thus, for the time being, passed out of existence, although a large proportion of both officers and men elected to remain in the P.A.M. and joined the Canadian Mounted Rifles.

In 1901 the Canadian Mounted Rifles were granted the title « Royal ». In 1909 in response to public pressure the name of this unit was changed to « Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) » to perpetuate the original Strathcona's Horse. Lt.-Col. Steele, later Maj.-Gen. Sir Sam Steele, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.V.O. was once again appointed the Commanding Officer. The Regiment continued its task of training the militia of Western Canada.

In 1914, with the outbreak of war, the unit left the West for Valcartier and in September proceeded to England with the First Canadian Contingent. Its Commanding Officer was Lt.-Col. A.C. MacDonnell D.S.O., who was subsequently G.O.C. of the First Canadian Division and Commandant of the Royal Military College. In May 1915, the Regiment proceeded to France dismounted, where it served in the line with the First Canadian Division until January 1916. The Regiment's baptism of fire came at Festubert, in May

1913. In January 1916, the Canadian Cavalry Brigade under Brig.-Gen. J. B. Seeley, D.S.O., now Lord Mottistone, was formed, and became part of the Fifth Cavalry Division until 1917, when with the reorganization of the British Cavalry, it became part of the Third Cavalry Division. On 30th March 1918, the Canadian Cavalry Brigade took part in a particularly brilliant action at Moreuil Wood. General Ludendorff, the strategist of the German High Command, stated in his memoirs that, having been prevented by this action from capturing Amiens, the great Spring offensive of the Germans was brought to a standstill. This marked a turning point in the war and the beginning of the end. Marshal Foch, the Allied Generalissimo, concurred in this view and cited the whole of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade in his general orders for their gallantry in this action. Lord Strathcona's Horse played a distinguished part. Lt. G. M. Flowerdew was awarded the V. C. posthumously for twice gallantly leading his Squadron in a charge against the German machine guns in the Wood. Lt. F.M.W. Harvey had previously won the V.C. for conspicuous gallantry in action during the Spring of 1917. Moreuil Wood Day has since been observed as the Regimental holiday and in each year the occasion of special celebration.

On Moreuil Wood Day, 1943, a memorable addition was made to Regimental History when the present Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal was made Honorary Colonel of the Regiment.

In 1919, the Regiment under Lt.-Col. G. Gooday, returned to Canada and on the reconstitution of the Permanent Active Militia, 1 January 1920, for the second time under command of Lt.-Col. D. J. MacDonald, D.S.O., was localized with squadrons in Winnipeg and Calgary as a Regiment of the P.A.M. The Regiment assumed an important place in the military and social life of the West, and there are few Westerners who do not know its colourful uniform and equally colourful history. In 1939, the Unit furnished Royal Escorts to Their Majesties the King and Queen on their visits to Winnipeg and Calgary.

In 1939, with the outbreak of war, to its intense disappointment the Regiment was not immediately mobilized. It did, however, supply a special mechanized squadron to the First Canadian Cavalry Regt (Mechanized). This squadron was withdrawn when the Regiment itself was mobilized as the 2nd Canadian Armoured Regiment, L.S.H. (RC) on 1 Jan 1941 in Lislewell, Ontario. In June it moved to Camp Borden, where it soon became familiar with the antique relics of Great War tanks which Colonel (now Maj.-Gen.) Worthington, C.B. M.C., M.M., had lately acquired from the U.S.A.

In the latter part of 1941 the Regiment proceeded to England as part of the Fifth Canadian Armoured Division, where it continued its training as part of the First Armoured Brigade. With the reorganization of the Canadian Armoured Corps it became part of the

Second Armoured Brigade, the name of which was changed in due course to Fifth Armoured Brigade.

During the summer of 1942, the Regiment was inspected by Their Majesties the King and Queen. The King suggested that the abbreviation of the Regiment's title be changed from L.S.H. to LdS.H., which was immediately done. Intensive training was carried out during the Regiment's stay in England. Late in 1943 the Regiment arrived in Italy, where it became part of the Canadian Corps attached to the Eighth Army.

During the middle of January 1944, the regiment moved to the scene of its first action in this war, the Ortona-Orsogna front, at first under command of 4 Inf Div and then in support of 8 Indian Div and finally of 1 Cdn Inf Div. Although contours and mud did not permit any freedom of action, most tanks had an opportunity to fire their first shots in anger.

During March, the regiment moved south for a period of training and then commenced the long move which terminated in the famous Liri Valley. Strathcona's were given the important task of exploiting the «break-through» of the Adolph Hitler line by securing a crossing of the Melfa River. Messages received from all of the senior commanders confirm that the regiment executed this task brilliantly; the 24th May 44 will long be remembered as Melfa Day. In the pursuit that followed, the regiment experienced its next encounter on 30th May, when, at the Torric

Cross-Road on Highway 4, heavy casualties were again inflicted upon a stubborn enemy.

In this first week of action, the regiment paid a heavy toll for its victories; -- 23 tanks were destroyed, 5 officers and 40 other ranks were killed, 15 officers and 90 other ranks were wounded. The Commanding Officer (Lt-Col. P. G. Griffin, DSO) and the 2nd-in-command were among those wounded. On 25th May, all of the fighting squadrons were commanded by subalterns.

Casualties inflicted upon the enemy include 8 Panther and 5 Mark IV tanks, 11 self-propelled guns, 15 nebelwerfers and about one dozen weapons of other types. Considerable transport and upwards of 30 prisoners were captured.

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### Battle Honours of the Regiment

1. South Africa	1900-1901
2. Festubert	1915
3. Somme	1916-1918
4. Bazentin	
5. Poelcote	
6. Fiers-Couselle	
7. Cambrai	1917-1918
8. St. Quentin	
9. Amiens	
10. Hindenburg Line	



11. St. Quentin Canal
12. Beaurevoir
13. Pursuit to Mons
14. France and Flanders

### Commanding Officers of the Regiment

- 1890 - Lt.-Col. S. B. Steele (Maj.-Gen. Sir Sam Steele, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.V.O. resumed command of the Regt on its reconstitution - died in 1914)
- 1912 - Lt.-Col. A.C. MacDonnell, D.S.O. (Lt.-Gen. A.C. MacDonnell, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.)
- 1915 - Lt.-Col. J.A. Heskith (Lt.-Col. J.A. Heskith, D.S.O.)
- \* 1917 - Lt.-Col. M. Doherty (Lt.-Col. M. Doherty, D.S.O. killed in action)
- \*\* 1917 - Lt.-Col. D.J. MacDonald (Brig D.J. MacDonald, D.S.O. and 2 bars)
- \*\* 1917 - Lt.-Col. C. Gooday
- \*\* 1919 - Lt.-Col. D.J. MacDonald (appointed C.O. for the second time)
- \* \*\* 1924 - Lt.-Col. C.E. Connolly (Brig. C.E. Connolly, D.S.O. and Bar)
- \*\* 1929 - Lt.-Col. L.F. Page (Maj.-Gen. L.F. Page, D.S.O. and Bar)

- \* \*\* 1939 - Lt.-Col. C.W. Devey (Colonel C.W. Devey)
- \* \*\* 1937 - Lt.-Col. F.M.W. Harvey (Brig. F.M.W. Harvey, V.C., M.C., Croix de Guerre)
- \*\* 1940 - Lt.-Col. N.A. Gianelli (Brig. N.A. Gianelli)
- \* \*\* 1942 - Lt.-Col. P.G. Griffin (Col. P.G. Griffin D.S.O.)
- \*\* 1944 - Lt.-Col. J.M. McAulty, MBE (Present Commanding Officer)

In addition the Regiment produced

- \* \*\* Brig G.R. Bradbrooke, M.C.
- \*\* Brig H.W. Foster.
- \*\* Brig J. Bingham.

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\*\* Denotes officers who served in the present war.

\* Denotes officers who rose from the ranks.

